28 also have been employed. Household utensils and vessels were fashioned
32 from wood and gourds. Bracelets and other ornaments were manufactured from
copper-wire or copper bars purchased from the Nyamwezi who smelted copper
[411] in Katanga. The traditional arms were spear, assegai, *pocue* (the short,
broad-bladed, two-edged Lunda sword) and battle-axe.(1) A defensive wea-
pon was the square, lightwood shield said to be unpierceable after being
[726] soaked in water.(2). Bows and arrows were apparently not used in war.(3)

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

CLAN ORGANIZATION(4)

614 The clan (*mukowa*) consists of persons, alive and dead, believed to be descended matrilineally from a common ancestor or ancestress, even though they may not be able to trace their ancestry. The clans, now dispersed, have each a traditional home, *ntulo* (a word also used for the source of a river), a common totemic name (usually the generic name of an animal or plant), and a common slogan, *ilumbo* (from *ukulumba*, to boast). In prin-
[602] ciple clans are exogamous but in fact this is not observed; the exogamous unit is the *cikota*, a subdivision of the clan. Each clan stands in a joking relationship (*bwali*) to one, or sometimes more than one other, with which its name is connected by an association of ideas. Examples of such paired clans are: the leopard and the goat (because leopards kill goats), the iron and the elephants (elephants were hunted with iron-headed spears), the mushroom and the ant-hill (mushrooms thrive on ant-hills). No preferential marriage obtains between the *bali* (persons in joking relationship) as is the case among the Bemba. In the mortuary ceremonies a special role is assigned to a *mwali* of the deceased. An isolated instance of an inter-clan avoidance pattern is provided by the Lion (*Bena Nkalaso*) and the Snake clans. Members of a clan are supposed to give hospitality to their fellow-clansmen whatever their tribal affiliation.

[773] Clan organisation is believed to be universal and coeval with mankind.
No mythical explanation of the origin of clans is offered. Religious or
[784] ritual cults are not practised on a clan basis. There is no prohibition against killing or eating the object from which the clan derives its name, nor, on the other hand, is any special veneration required.

[554] The clans are not hierarchically organised though, in fact, some may enjoy greater prestige owing to their numerical strength or connections and others may be regarded as of little consequence, like the derided Pins and Needles clan. The clan to which the Kazembe's mother belongs is, for the duration of his reign, placed in a privileged position.

As a rule the clans have no specialised economic or ritual functions although the intervention of the Fish clan (*Bena Mpende*) is invoked when the water is too low for the salmon to reach their normal spawning grounds. No clan meetings are held.

(1) Valdez, op.cit., p.239.
(2) ibid.
(3) Burton, p.43.
(4) Based on information provided by I.G. Cunnison who is at present engaged on an intensive study of the Luapula peoples.

614 186 195 praise-names are very similar to those shouted in honour of a chief on formal occasions or used as titles of address to him, and these phrases, preserved exactly in traditional form, and often expressed in archaic language, appear to be characteristic of Bantu chieftainship and clan system. Malinowski has shown in a typical Melanesian society how the myths of a clan origin, 'owned' and recounted by its members, form a recognized charter for the exercise of legal privileges such as rights of occupation of land or ritual prerogatives, and it is quite probable that among Bantu, where myths, in the sense of tales of the miraculous doings of clan heroes are rare, yet the recitation of the names of clan or chiefly ancestors, the repetition of stories of their lives, or the shouting of a key sentence or proverb from such tales may fulfil very similar sociological functions. [173]

614 [616] It is the name of the Bemba *mukoa* and the story of its acquisition by a special lineage group that provides the basis for the pairing of opposite clans, or *banungwe*. The clan names are those of a variety of objects, animal, plants, meteorological phenomena such as rain, parts of the human body, and even cultural activities such as funeral lamentations. The most common are the following:—crocodile (*ngandu** or *ngwena*—the royal clan), fish (*sabi*, or in the Bisa country *tembo*), lion (*nkalamo*), leopard (*ngo**), otter (*mbao*), rat (*mpuku*), frog (*luo*), bees (*kashimu*), elephant (*nsofu*), wild pig (*ngulube* or *Cabala** or *nama*), tortoise (*Nkamba*), goat (*mbushi*), dog (*mbwa*), honey-bird (*nguni*): millet (*besa**), porridge (*bwali*), mushroom (3 clans—*boa*, the ordinary word for mushroom, *mwansa*, a special type of mushroom, and *ngona*, the Bisa mushroom clan), grass (*kani*, diminutive of *cani*), gourd (*lunda*), castor-oil seed (*mono*), wild loquat (*mumba** or *Cilufya*), tree or drum clan (*ngoma* or *muti* in Bisa country), beans (*nkanda**): iron (*mbulo*), rain (*mfula*), anthill (*culu*), male genitals (*membe*), female genitals (*nkashi*), lamentations (*nkonde** or *misoa*), pot (*inongo*). It is interesting to note that some of the names are words no longer in common use, *i.e.*, those marked with an asterisk, and that the majority of these titles are found widely spread among those Rhodesian tribes which claim an origin from the Luba-speaking peoples in the Congo, such as the Kaonde, Bisa, Ushi, Unga, etc. This is especially true of the [192] 614 171

[p. 189(A)]

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A MODERN MOVEMENT OF WITCH-FINDERS

AUDREY I. RICHARDS

ALL over present-day Africa witch-finders seem to appear, as it were from nowhere, flourish for a time, and then disappear. Either it is some individual of unusual personality in his community who announces a magic remedy for human sufferings, and so obtains a following, or else it is a more or less organized band of wonder-workers which crosses the border from some neighbouring territory with all the kudos attached to the foreign and the strange. Among these latter the celebrated *Bamucapi*, who recently swept from Nyasaland into Northern Rhodesia and later reached Southern Rhodesia and the Congo, are an interesting example. The actual origin of this movement is difficult to discover, but I watched it at its height in the Bemba country of N.E. Rhodesia in the summer of 1934, and I want in this article to describe very shortly the methods of these witch-finders, and to try to account for their success.[1]

The *Bamucapi* themselves were for the most part young and dressed in European clothing. They went about the country in ones and twos, usually paying local assistants to help them. Their leader, they said, was one Kamwende of Mlanje in Nyasaland, but he was spoken of as a person of mythical attributes rather than as an organizer in actual control. The procedure of the witch-finders was impressive. Arrived at a village, they summoned the headman, who was bidden to gather his people together and to kill and cook a chicken for the ritual meal of which all were to partake. Once assembled the men and women were lined up in separate files, and passed one by one behind the back of the witch-finder, who caught their reflections in a small round mirror by a turn of his wrist. By his image in the glass it was claimed that a sorcerer could be immediately detected, and thus discovered, he was immediately called upon to yield up his horns (*nsengo*), a term which included all harmful magic charms. Wonderful stories were told of the perspicacity of the witch-finders. Horns wilfully concealed were

[1] During this time Professor Malinowski, then on a tour of inspection of his pupils' fields of study, visited my area, worked himself on this problem, and generously allowed me to add his notes to my own.

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apparently always unmasked. 'Look under the roof of his granary,' the *Bamucapi* would cry in case of a denial by the sorcerer, and there the hidden danger would be immediately brought to light. 'We know they made no mistakes', was the significant comment of natives, 'because the men and women they spotted as sorcerers were people we had been afraid of all along!'

But with the detection of the sorcerer a cure was provided. Each man and woman drank a sip of the famous *mucapi* medicine—a fine red powder which gave a soapy solution when shaken with water in a bottle—the name of the witch-finders being said to come from the Cinyanja word *kucapa*, to rub or wash clothes. For this medicine the claim of the *Bamucapi* was staggering. It was nothing less than the complete removal of witchcraft from the territory. A man who had drunk the *mucapi* medicine, and then returned to his evil practices, was liable to instant death—a grisly death in which he was to swell to enormous proportions, his limbs crinkled with dropsy, and his body too heavy to be carried to the grave. Nor could a cunning sorcerer escape by refusing to pass in front of the magic mirror. He would merely be caught at a kind of second coming of the founder of the movement, who was to return beating a mysterious drum outside each village at night. At its sound all witches and wizards as yet undetected would be compelled to follow to the graveyard where their crimes would be finally unmasked. Some told also of the coming of a mythical woman with one breast in front and one behind. The good she would suckle in front, while the wicked would find themselves following willynilly behind. Such stories were told and retold in the villages with the myth of the original Kamwende, who, it was said, had received his revelation in the grave from which he had been resurrected after two days, with one eye, one arm, and one leg powerless, but with the secret of the *mucapi* medicine and the power to resist poisons of all kinds.

As a secondary object the *Bamucapi* sold protective charms, pinches of powder sewn up in small cloth bags. For 3*d.* charms could be bought against wild beasts and snakes, for 6*d.* powder to protect the gardens from animal pests, for 6*d.* a charm for luck and success, and for 5*s.*, it was rumoured, a charm for winning the favour of the local Government official. 'But you can see for yourself', my informant added, 'that very few natives have had as much money to spend as that!'

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satisfied native belief, while their ritual contained many superficial features of the white civilization. The witch-finders came as well-dressed young men, not as wrinkled old native doctors (*yanga*) in greasy bark-cloth. They worked in the open and lined up the natives after the manner of an official taking a census. They sold their medicine in stoppered chemist's bottles rather than in dirty old horns pulled from a skin bag. Their teaching, too, was an interesting blend of the old and the new. Their power, they said, came from Lesa, the High God on whom the *yanga* calls when preparing his medicine, the term being used by the missionary also to describe the Christian God. But curiously enough the efficacy of the medicine depended on the keeping of a number of taboos which are deeply embedded in native belief, such as, for instance, the taboo on a man having intercourse with a woman in the bush. Some natives said that Marya also helped the *Bamucapi*, but added quickly not the Marya of the Catholic missions, but another one; for there is no doubt the movement was anti-mission as a whole. Phrases reminiscent of Christian teaching were also used. The witch-finders addressed the villagers with a preliminary sermon, a technique quite foreign to the native *yanga*, and stressed such ideas as the washing of sins. Kamwende, it will be remembered, descended into the grave and rose again, and was expected to reappear at a second coming. It is interesting, too, that the *Bamucapi* followed the distinctions made by the Roman Catholic missions in the classification of native medicines. Those that contained medicine (*muti*) only were permitted, but those that contained what the Babemba call a *cisimba*, an activating principle, such as an eagle's claw or the bone of a squirrel, were to be forbidden.

But over and above the attraction of novelty there were deeper causes behind the success of the *Bamucapi*. The witch-finders claimed, as I stated, to remove the dangerous weapons of the sorcerer. We have to ask ourselves then, whether the fear of witchcraft is one which dominates native belief. Is black magic, in the sense of a definite ritual actually performed by a man in the belief that it will harm his enemy, very constantly performed among the Babemba?

An analysis of the horns collected by the *Bamucapi* throws an interesting light on this question. I took possession in one instance of the complete heap of horns and magic charms, 139 in all, which had been